



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2017-0248; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-088-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2014-26-10, for all Airbus Model A318, A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes. AD 2014-26-10 currently requires revising the maintenance or inspection program to incorporate maintenance requirements and airworthiness limitations. Since we issued AD 2014-26-10, we have determined that more restrictive maintenance instructions and airworthiness limitations are necessary. This proposed AD would require revising the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or revised airworthiness limitation requirements. This proposed AD also removes airplanes from the applicability. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this NPRM, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France;

telephone: +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax: +33 5 61 93 44 51; email:

account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet: <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2017-0248; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations

office (telephone: 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone: 425-227-1405; fax: 425-227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposed AD. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2017-0248; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-088-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

Discussion

On December 19, 2014, we issued AD 2014-26-10, Amendment 39-18061 (80 FR 2813, January 21, 2015) (“AD 2014-26-10”), for all Airbus Model A318, A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes. AD 2014-26-10 was prompted by a determination that the

maintenance actions for airplane systems susceptible to aging must be mandated.

AD 2014-26-10 requires revising the maintenance or inspection program to incorporate maintenance requirements and airworthiness limitations. We issued AD 2014-26-10 to mitigate the risks associated with aging effects of airplane systems. Such aging effects could change the characteristics of the systems leading to an increased potential for failure, which could result in failure of certain life-limited parts, and reduced structural integrity or reduced controllability of the airplane.

Since we issued AD 2014-26-10, we have determined that more restrictive maintenance instructions and airworthiness limitations are necessary.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2016-0093, dated May 13, 2016 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus Model A318, A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes. The MCAI states:

The airworthiness limitations for Airbus A320 family aeroplanes are currently defined and published in Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 Airworthiness Limitations Section (ALS) documents. The airworthiness limitations applicable to the System Equipment Maintenance Requirements, which are approved by [European Aviation Safety Agency] EASA, are specified in ALS Part 4.

The instructions contained in the ALS Part 4 have been identified as mandatory actions for continued airworthiness. Failure to comply with these instructions could result in an unsafe condition.

Previously, EASA issued AD 2013-0146 [which corresponds to FAA AD 2014-26-10] to require accomplishment of all maintenance actions as described in ALS Part 4 at Revision 01. The new ALS Part 4

Revision 03 (hereafter referred to as ‘the ALS’ in this AD) includes new and/or more restrictive requirements. ALS Part 4 Revision 03, issue 02, has been released to include editorial changes.

For the reason described above, this [EASA] AD retains the requirements of EASA AD 2013-0146, which is superseded, and requires accomplishment of the actions specified in the ALS.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at

<http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2017-0248.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

Airbus has issued Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 ALS Part 4, “System Equipment Maintenance Requirements (SEMR)” Revision 03 at Issue 02, dated January 22, 2016. The service information describes preventative maintenance requirements and includes updated inspections and intervals to be incorporated into the maintenance or inspection program. This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES.

FAA’s Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

This proposed AD would require revisions to certain operator maintenance documents to include new actions (e.g., inspections). Compliance with these actions is required by 14 CFR 91.403(c). For airplanes that have been previously modified, altered, or repaired in the areas addressed by this proposed AD, the operator may not be able to accomplish the actions described in the revisions. In this situation, to comply with 14 CFR 91.403(c), the operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance according to paragraph (k)(1) of this proposed AD. The request should include a description of changes to the required inspections that will ensure the continued operational safety of the airplane.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI or Service Information

The EASA AD specifies that if there are findings from the ALS inspection tasks, then corrective action must be accomplished in accordance with Airbus maintenance documentation. However, this proposed AD does not include that requirement because operators of U.S.-registered airplanes are required by general airworthiness and operational regulations to use FAA-acceptable methods when performing maintenance. We consider those methods to be adequate to address any corrective actions necessitated by the findings of ALS inspections required by this proposed AD.

Although the EASA AD recommends accomplishing the tasks specified in the ALS after the effective date of the EASA AD, and revising the maintenance program within 12 months after the effective date of the EASA AD, this proposed AD would only require revising the maintenance or inspection program within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, which correlates with the compliance time required by AD 2014-26-10.

In developing an appropriate compliance time for this proposed AD, we considered the degree of urgency associated with the subject unsafe condition, the average utilization of the affected fleet, and the time necessary to perform the revision (1 work-hour). In light of these factors, we find that a 30-day compliance time represents an appropriate interval of time for affected airplanes to continue to operate without compromising safety.

These differences have been coordinated with the EASA and Airbus.

Airworthiness Limitations Based on Type Design

The FAA recently became aware of an issue related to the applicability of ADs that require incorporation of an ALS revision into an operator's maintenance or inspection program.

Typically, when these types of ADs are issued by civil aviation authorities of other countries, they apply to all airplanes covered under an identified type certificate (TC). The corresponding FAA AD typically retains applicability to all of those airplanes.

In addition, U.S. operators must operate their airplanes in an airworthy condition, in accordance with 14 CFR 91.7(a). Included in this obligation is the requirement to perform any maintenance or inspections specified in the ALS, and in accordance with the ALS as specified in 14 CFR 43.16 and 14 CFR 91.403(c), unless an alternative has been approved by the FAA.

When a type certificate is issued for a type design, the specific ALS, including revisions, is a part of that type design, as specified in 14 CFR 21.31(c).

The sum effect of these operational and maintenance requirements is an obligation to comply with the ALS defined in the type design referenced in the

manufacturer's conformity statement. This obligation may introduce a conflict with an AD that requires a specific ALS revision if new airplanes are delivered with a later revision as part of their type design.

To address this conflict, the FAA has approved alternative methods of compliance (AMOCs) that allow operators to incorporate the most recent ALS revision into their maintenance/inspection programs, in lieu of the ALS revision required by the AD. This eliminates the conflict and enables the operator to comply with both the AD and the type design.

However, compliance with AMOCs is normally optional, and we recently became aware that some operators choose to retain the AD-mandated ALS revision in their fleet-wide maintenance/inspection programs, including those for new airplanes delivered with later ALS revisions, to help standardize the maintenance of the fleet. To ensure that operators comply with the applicable ALS revision for newly delivered airplanes containing a later revision than that specified in an AD, we plan to limit the applicability of ADs that mandate ALS revisions to those airplanes that are subject to an earlier revision of the ALS, either as part of the type design or as mandated by an earlier AD.

This proposed AD therefore would apply to the airplanes identified in paragraph (c) of this AD with an original certificate of airworthiness or original export certificate of airworthiness that was issued on or before the date of approval of the ALS revision identified in this proposed AD. Operators of airplanes with an original certificate of airworthiness or original export certificate of airworthiness issued after that date must

comply with the airworthiness limitations specified as part of the approved type design and referenced on the type certificate data sheet.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 1,032 airplanes of U.S. registry.

The actions required by AD 2014-26-10, and retained in this proposed AD take about 1 work-hour per product, at an average labor rate of \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, the estimated cost of the actions that are required by AD 2014-26-10 is \$85 per product.

We also estimate that it would take about 1 work-hour per product to comply with the basic requirements of this proposed AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this proposed AD on U.S. operators to be \$87,720, or \$85 per product.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority

because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2014-26-10, Amendment 39-18061 (80 FR 2813, January 21, 2015), and adding the following new AD:

Airbus: Docket No. FAA-2017-0248; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-088-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

This AD replaces AD 2014-26-10, Amendment 39-18061 (80 FR 2813, January 21, 2015) (“AD 2014-26-10”).

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to the Airbus airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), (c)(3), and (c)(4) of this AD; certificated in any category; with an original certificate of airworthiness or original export certificate of airworthiness issued on or before December 21, 2015.

(1) Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes.

(2) Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes.

(3) Model A320--211, -212, -214, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes.

(4) Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 05, Time Limits/Maintenance Checks.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a determination that more restrictive maintenance instructions and airworthiness limitations are necessary. We are issuing this AD to mitigate the risks associated with aging effects of airplane systems. Such aging effects could change the characteristics of the systems leading to an increased potential for failure, which could result in failure of certain life-limited parts, and reduced structural integrity or reduced controllability of the airplane.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Retained Requirement: Maintenance or Inspection Program Revision, with No Changes

This paragraph restates the requirements of paragraph (g) of AD 2014-26-10, with no changes. Within 30 days after February 25, 2015 (the effective date of AD 2014-26-10): Revise the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 Airworthiness Limitations Section, ALS Part 4, “Aging Systems Maintenance,” Revision 01, dated June 15, 2012. The initial compliance time for doing the actions is at the applicable time specified in Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 Airworthiness Limitations Section, ALS Part 4, “Aging Systems Maintenance,” Revision 01, dated June 15, 2012; or within 2 weeks after revising the

maintenance or inspection program; whichever occurs later. Accomplishing the actions specified in paragraph (i) of this AD terminates the requirements of this paragraph.

(h) Retained Requirement: No Alternative Actions or Intervals, with New Paragraph Reference

This paragraph restates the requirements of paragraph (h) of AD 2014-26-10, with new paragraph reference. Except as required by paragraph (i) of this AD, after accomplishment of the revision required by paragraph (g) of this AD, no alternative actions (e.g., inspections) or intervals may be used unless the actions or intervals are approved as an alternative method of compliance (AMOC) in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (k)(1) of this AD.

(i) New Requirement: Maintenance or Inspection Program Revision

Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD: Revise the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 Airworthiness Limitations Section (ALS) Part 4, “System Equipment Maintenance Requirements (SEMR)” Revision 03 at Issue 02, dated January 22, 2016. The initial compliance time for doing the actions is at the applicable time specified in Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 Airworthiness Limitations Section, ALS Part 4, “System Equipment Maintenance Requirements (SEMR)” Revision 03 at Issue 02, dated January 22, 2016; or within 2 weeks after revising the maintenance or inspection program; whichever occurs later. Accomplishing the actions specified in this paragraph terminates the requirements of paragraph (g) of this AD.

(j) New Provision: No Alternative Actions or Intervals

After the action required by paragraph (i) of this AD has been done, no alternative actions (e.g., inspections) or intervals may be used unless the actions or intervals are approved as an AMOC in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (k)(1) of this AD.

(k) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Branch, send it to ATTN: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone: 425-227-1405; fax: 425-227-1149. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov.

(i) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(ii) AMOCs approved previously for AD 2014-26-10 are approved as AMOCs for the corresponding provisions of paragraph (g) of this AD.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: As of the effective date of this AD, for any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(l) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA AD 2016-0093, dated May 13, 2016, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2017-0248.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone: +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax: +33 5 61 93 44 51; email: account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet: <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 5, 2017.

Michael Kaszycki,
Acting Manager,
Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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